

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 IO-13 SSM-03 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EUR-12 AF-10
/096 W

-----018824 232152Z /72

R 231430Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBSSY CAIRO
RO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 8627
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
USMISSION SINAI

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 13976

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EG IS XF MPOL
SUBJ: POLCOUNS MEETING WITH MAJ. GEN. MAGDUB

1. DURING CALL BY POLCOUNS AUGUST 22 TO DISCUSS SEPARATE
SUBJECT, MAJ. GEN. TAHA MAGDUB MADE SEVERAL COMMENTS OF
INTEREST ON PEACE PROCESS. MAGDUB, WHO HAS TAKEN NEW JOB
AS SEC GEN OF PERMANENT SECRETARIAT FOR NATIONAL DEFENSE
COUNCIL, IS NOT ONLY ONE OF GAMASY'S CHIEF STAFF AIDES, BUT
OBVIOUSLY ENJOYS GAMASY'S CONFIDENCE. HIS COMMENTS ARE
REPORTED BLEOW.

2. NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL. IT IS HEADED BY PRESIDENT
SADAT AND HAS EXISTED FOR SOME TIME. HOWEVER, IT HAS NOT
HAD PERMANENT SECRETARIAT AND MAGDUB HAS BEEN APPOINTED
ITS SECRETARY GENERAL WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR RECRUITING
AND ORGANIZING STAFF. HE STILL IS IN THE EARLY STAGES OF
DOING SO, PARTLY BECAUSE OF TIME REQUIRED FOR HIS OTHER
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PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITY WHICH IS TO PREPARE FOR THE GENEVA
CONFERENCE. MAGDUB SAID HE ALSO CONTINUES TO HAVE RESPON-
SIBILITY FOR SFM, UNEF AND OTHER ORGS IN SINAI, BUT NOT
OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILTII WHICH HAS BEEN TURNED OVER TO
MAJ. GEN. HASSAN KHATIB.

3. MEPC. WITHIN PAST MONTH HIS OPTIMISM ABOUT GENEVA AND

SETTLEMENT PROSPECTS HAS TURNED TO MILD PESSIMISM BECAUSE OF (A) BEGIN GOVERNMENT AND HARD-LINE POSITIONS IT HAS TAKEN AND (B) THE "UNCLEAR POSITION" THAT U.S.S. IS ADOPTING IN FACE OF ISRAELI ACTIONS. ARABS CANNOT ACCEPT THAT IF U.S. ADMINISTRATION WISHES TO INFLUENCE ISRAELI STAND IT CANNOT DO SO. ISRAELIS, "WHOM I KNOW WELL", WILL KEEP PRESSING ON ALL FRONTS UNTIL FORCED TO BACK DOWN. "SLIGHT CAUSE FOR OPTIMISM" EXISTS ONLY BECAUSE HIS SUPERIORS KEEP PRESSURE ON HIM FOR COMPLETION OF PRE-GENEVA WORK IN MAXIMUM OF TWO MONTHS. HE SPECULATES THEREFORE THAT HIS SUPERIORS MAY HAVE REASON FOR OPTIMISM OF WHICH HE UNAWARE. IT IS NOW ALMOST TWO YEARS SINCE SIGNING OF SINAI II AGREEMENT AND GOE PATIENCE IN ABSENCE OF ANY NEW MOVEMENT IS WEARING THIN. FURTHERMORE, THERE IS NO DISCERNABLE JUSTIFICATION FOR MORE DELAYS.

4. ARMS BALANCE IN ANY ME SETTLEMENT: MAGDUB REVEALED LITTLE ABOUT ACTUAL WORK IN PREPARATION FOR GENEVA ONLY SAYING THAT THERE WERE MANY ISSUES THAT HAD TO BE STUDIED, INCLUDING WITHDRAWAL AND ARMS BALANCE. ARMS BALANCE, IN PARTICULAR VERY DIFFICULT SINCE ISRAEL FACES THREAT ONLY FROM ARAB STATES. IF AGREEMENT REACHED, THREAT TO ISRAEL WILL DISAPPEAR. HOWEVER, ARAB STATES, PARTICULARLY EGYPT, FACE MANY OTHER SECURITY THREATS; E.G. LIBYA, ETHIOPIA AND PERHAPS SOVIET UNION, AT LEAST INDIRECTLY.

5. ISRAELI ACTIVITY IN SINAI. ISRAELIS ARE MOST ACTIVE IN
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THE RAFAH AREA BUT ALSO IN THEIR OIL OPERATIONS AT AL-TUR AND AT SHARM AL-SHAYKH. ISRAELIS WILL ATTEMPT TO STAY IN ALL OF THESE AREAS, BUT IF FORCED TO WITHDRAW UNDER PRESSURE WILL THEN USE THESE INSTALLATIONS AS BARGAINING WEAPONS.

6. JOINT COMMISSION. JOINT COMMISSION HAS NOT MET SINCE DECEMBER 1976 AND IT IS UNLIKELY TO MEET AGAIN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. FROM GOE POINT OF VIEW, IT IS A WASTE OF TIME SINCE ISRAELI SIDE DOES NOT HAVE THE POWER TO MAKE DECISIONS, BUT CAN ONLY GO BACK TO HIGHER AUTHORITY. MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE MEANS OF RESOLVING PROBLEMS IS THROUGH INTERMEDIARY OF GENERAL SIILASVUO, AS PROVEN BY RECENT AGREEMENT ON ADDITIONAL CONSTRUCTION PERSONNEL FOR E-1. MAGDUB SAID SIILASVUO HAD SUCCEEDED IN RESOLVING THIS ISSUR. BUT DID NOT GIVE DETAILS. (COMMENT: THIS IS CONTRADICTORY TO OUR MOST RECENT INFO THAT GOI HAD AGREED SUBJECT TO ISSUE BEING DECIDED IN JOINT COMMISSION AND THAT IT BE GIVEN SIMILAR RIGHT WHEN REQUIRED AT J-1.)

7. 32ND UNGA. MAGDUB HAD SUGGESTED TO GAMASY THAT PERHAPS IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR HIM TO ACCOMPANY FONMIN FAHMY TO UNGA. HE DID NOT KNOW WHETHER GAMASY WAS PURSUING SUGGESTION

BUT HE, MAGDUB, DID NOT HAVE INTENTION OF RAISING IT AGAIN.
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